



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Region 1
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901

**DECISION NOTICE
and
Finding of No Significant Impact
for the
PROPOSED OSPREY VIEW FISHERIES CONSERVATION AREA
SITE CLEANUP**

October 20, 2015

Description of the Proposed Action

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to improve public safety and restore the floodplain to natural conditions at the Osprey View Fisheries Conservation Area (FCA) by removing one standing but dilapidated building, one collapsed building, an old pile of lumber, old household debris, and scattered foundational materials in the northwest corner of the property.

Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Process and Public Involvement

On September 8, 2015, FWP released a draft environmental assessment (EA) for the Osprey View FCA Site Cleanup. FWP notified the public about the proposed cleanup through legal ads, press releases, and emails/letters to all adjoining landowners and other interested publics. The EA evaluated the potential impacts of the following alternatives:

Alternative A: No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, FWP would not remove the building or any of the debris from the property. The northwest corner of the property would remain unsafe for the recreating public.

Alternative B: Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, FWP will put the property cleanup out to bid for removing the buildings, lumber, and other various debris. FWP would help to keep the cost of this cleanup low by allowing the contractor to salvage the remaining useable wood on the property in partial or full compensation for the cleanup.

Summary of Public Comment

FWP received a total of twelve written comments during the 15-day public comment period. Seven were in favor of total cleanup of the area and five were opposed to a portion of the proposed cleanup activities. Those who expressed concern with the proposed activities requested that FWP retain the standing structure for aesthetic reasons. One of the five wanted FWP to retain the collapsed building in addition to the standing one. All commenters supported removing the scattered debris from around the site. Comments in opposition focused on the following three issues:

1. One person suggested that the buildings provide valuable bird and wildlife habitat.

FWP Response: The buildings are currently being used by rodents, pigeons, and possibly skunks. All of these species are common in the area and will be able to relocate if the structures are removed. The management plan for this property prioritizes providing habitat for nesting waterfowl and songbirds and these buildings do not provide this type of habitat.

2. Three people thought the public safety concerns on the property were overstated. One person thought it was because no one uses the area, but the other two suggested that people do use the area and either they should be responsible for their own safety or FWP could simply close the property to all public use to alleviate the concern.

FWP Response: Comments on this proposal clearly indicated differing perceptions on the level of public use in this area. FWP believes that people are using the property and, as public land managers, we attempt to provide opportunities for public recreation consistent with protecting the habitat values for which the property was acquired. Demands for outdoor recreation opportunities continue to rise within the Flathead Valley, and we believe the current level of use and public safety risk will only increase with time on this property.

3. Several people commented that the aesthetic value will be diminished by removing the standing structure that provides a certain character to this north shore area.

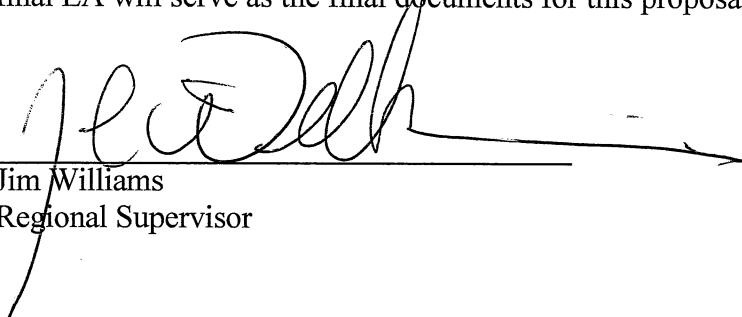
FWP Response: We agree that the aesthetic value of the property will be changed by removing the standing building. Aesthetics are personal values and differ between individuals. For example, some people may feel the view is better with the old buildings and some may like it better without the buildings. Eventually if FWP leaves the building, it will further deteriorate and collapse since no funding is proposed to maintain the structure. These impacts were acknowledged in the draft environmental assessment. During the public comment period we were also contacted by people interested in salvaging and repurposing the old wood.

FWP Recommended Alternative and Final Decision Recommendation

In reviewing all the public comment and other relevant information, and evaluating the environmental effects, I recommend that FWP proceed with the Proposed Action and clean up the Osprey View FCA. FWP recognizes that this will affect the view valued by some members of the public. FWP acknowledges that the building has inherent aesthetic worth so we will solicit bids for the cleanup work that allows the contractor to either relocate the standing building or remove and repurpose salvageable wood from the site. A notice will appear in the local newspapers for anyone interested in bidding on this project.

Through the public review process described above the public identified some important issues, but FWP found no significant impacts on the human or physical environments associated with this proposal; therefore, the EA is the appropriate level of analysis, and an environmental impact statement is not required.

Noting and including the responses to public comments, this decision notice together with the final EA will serve as the final documents for this proposal.



Jim Williams
Regional Supervisor

October 20, 2015
Date